

Why You Should Attend NAMM!

Are you uncertain as to the development of future market trends and technologies? Do you feel that your sales reps may be presenting you with a self-serving analysis of the market? Do you feel the need to find out what's *really* going on in the industry? If you answer any of the following questions in the affirmative, you are like the majority of music retailers, and you should make a point of attending the upcoming NAMM International Music & Sound Expo.

Successful music retailers have to focus their energies on understanding the minutia of their local markets. However, in concentrating on a single trading area, it is easy to lose sight of the direction of the overall music market. NAMM's International Expo offers retailers a unique "window" on large market trends that is available nowhere else.

Observant Expo visitors can readily and confidently discern which products are hot and which are not. It's far more difficult to make the same product assessments when a sales rep is giving his pitch in your store. Furthermore, the first-hand contact that only a trade show provides facilitates the evaluation of the people, products, and programs that are vital to the future of your business. When you weigh the benefits of attending the show against the cost of airfare and lodging, it proves to be one of the better investments you can make.

And as if assessing market trends and products is not enough, NAMM has turned the trade show into something of "University" of music retailing. Throughout the four-day Expo, industry experts and outside consultants will conduct sessions touching on a wide variety of subjects ranging from marketing MIDI, to better salesmanship, to effective credit techniques. These educational offerings are remarkably comprehensive, and even the most experienced businessmen stand to learn something.

Of special interest at this year's show is a session sponsored by *Music Trades* featuring sales consultant Bob Popyk. Entitled "How To Find More Customers To Talk To . . . Without Relying On Walk-In Traffic Or Store Advertising," the session offers a wealth of useful and cost-effective suggestions on how to increase the visibility of your business and attract more customers.

With the show just a few short weeks away, make your plans to attend now. Insights garnered in Chicago will undoubtedly assist you in better serving your local market.

Paul A. Majeski
Publisher

Free Trade Is Vital

Increasing trade friction between the U.S., Europe, and the Orient has grabbed recent headlines, and particularly significant has been the 100% tariff levied on certain Japanese-manufactured chips. For those who think that this has nothing to do with the music industry, think again. Import statistics published elsewhere in this issue reveal that imported musical products now account for more than 50% of the total U.S. music market. Restrictive trade legislation, like the Gephardt amendment now before the Senate, could have a serious impact on the music industry.

Music imports outstrip exports by a wide margin, but arbitrarily closing the U.S. market would do little to help U.S. producers. In the absence of imported goods, the community of music retailers would undoubtedly shrink, ultimately causing damage to U.S. manufacturers as well.

In other words, free trade is vital to the future prosperity of our industry; however, free trade should be reciprocal. With the use of tariffs and other barriers, a number of foreign countries that export to the U.S. have effectively excluded U.S. music products from their market. In light of the openness of the U.S. market, this situation is untenable.

As a small industry, music is in no position to shape the current debate on trade. The best we can do is hope that our elected and appointed officials address the trade issue by tackling the difficult task of stimulating U.S. exports rather than simply restricting imports.

Brian T. Majeski
Editor